

News Release

For Immediate Release
March 31, 2006

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National Consultant to Present Analysis of a Single Payer Health Care System in Hawaii at April 4 Health Care Task Force Meeting

HONOLULU – On Tuesday, April 4, John Sheils, Vice President of The Lewin Group, will present their analysis of an illustrative single payer health care system in Hawaii to the Health Care Task Force at 4:00 pm at the John A. Burns School of Medicine, Medical Education Building, Room 314.

According to Rep. Josh Green, M.D., Task Force Chair, the analysis was commissioned as part of the Task Force's charge to develop a plan to implement health care for all Hawaii residents, pursuant to Act 223, SLH 2005. "This analysis contains information about our existing health care system as well as how a single payer system could offer affordable health care for all Hawaii's people. I believe that affordable health care should be available to all Hawaii residents and I hope that the Task Force will seriously consider this analysis as we develop our plan of health care coverage for all," said Rep. Green.

The single payer concept is generally understood as a health care system where one entity is responsible for the financing of all health care services for an entire population of consumers. While the feasibility of a single payer health care system has been discussed in prior legislative sessions, policymakers have lacked sufficient economic and policy analysis to give full consideration to this concept.

Single payer health care systems are currently operating in other countries. The Medicare program, which finances health care services for those over age 65 and certain disabled populations, is the only single payer system adopted to-date in the United States. If Hawaii adopts a single payer system, it would be the first state in the nation to do so.

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The Lewin Group analysis will show current sources of funding and expenditures for Hawaii's health care system and how a proposed single payer system would provide health care coverage for all Hawaii residents. The analysis of the proposed single payer system does not include coverage for Medicare, military, or federal employees who presently receive health care insurance through federal programs. However, all Hawaii residents currently receiving their health care insurance through their employment, state government, or private insurance programs would be covered under this system as well as their dependents and Hawaii residents who are presently uninsured.

A discussion draft of The Lewin Group presentation is available at:

<http://www.healthcoveragehawaii.org/taskforce/index.html>

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